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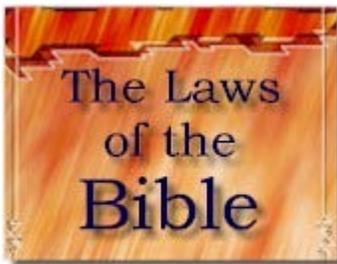
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The Laws of the Bible

From *The Open Bible Expanded Edition*, 1983¹

Typeset and Comments by David Sielaff, April 2020

Then read the accompanying [Newsletter for April 2020](#)



The Laws of God given to Moses and others throughout the Old Testament is the constitution for the people of Israel. Some laws were given in Genesis before Moses² but most were given during the time of Moses in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Some laws were modified in the Book of Deuteronomy for use after the people of Israel entered the land YHWH promised them. Israel changed from a pastoral to an agricultural culture, with the beginnings of an urban society. Laws changed with the culture.

Preface — by David Sielaff

The body of this article presents the Laws of God for human society to govern Israelite society in ancient Israel. The formatting is mine, modified from the original for clarity and emphasis. The footnotes are my comments for clarification and to present ASK material that explain the Laws. These Laws of God were comprehensive and are basic rules for a just society in cultures and governments in ancient times. Some are applicable even today. This structure of laws of human society given by God is useful for atheistic governments, as well as Muslim-based law in various religious governments and non-Western governments.

While Scripture defines what “laws” are, it will be useful to note how the *Miriam-Webster Dictionary* defines aspects of “[law](#),” for which there are six noun definitions. Only the first two concern us. The first definition is:

“A binding custom or practice of a community: a rule of conduct or action prescribed or formally recognized as binding or enforced by a controlling authority.”

¹ This article is taken from *The Open Bible Expanded Edition*, New King James Version, © Copyright 1983, by Thomas Nelson, Inc. (www.thomasnelson.com). Used by permission granted November 14, 2019. Thomas Nelson is an international Bible publisher, a subsidiary of HarperCollins. The publisher is the author.

² See “[Temple Symbolism in Genesis](#)” (1977). Then read “[Mosaic Prophecies for the End-Time](#)” (1996). Both were by Dr. Ernest Martin. Yes, there are prophecies in the books by Moses for our time. The Book of Genesis was collected and edited by Moses and it contains prophecies. The other four books also included prophecies of YHWH that were given to Moses. Balaam the pagan prophet gave a prophecy. Moses gave a major prophecy in Deuteronomy chapter 32. Details are in Dr. Martin’s article.

The second *Webster's* definition of "Law" is: "[2a] **often capitalized : the revelation of the will of God set forth in the Old Testament**, [2b] **capitalized : the first part of the Jewish scriptures : Pentateuch, Torah.**" God gave a set of binding laws and practices for the Israelite community to guide their conduct. Those laws are set out in the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.³ Yes, Genesis is the first book of the Law.

As Moses wrote in Deuteronomy, the Laws of God were written for a reason. They were intended for Israel. Of course some of the laws are universal and useful for Gentile peoples, and nations, and their laws somewhat reflect the Laws of God given to Israel.⁴

"For what nation is there so great, who has God so nigh [close] unto them, as YHWH our God is in all things that we call upon him for?"

And what nation is there so great, that has statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

Only take heed to yourself, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life: but teach them [the laws to] your sons, and your sons' sons."

• *Deuteronomy 4:7-9*

The nation of Israel had the right, by virtue of their covenant relationship with YHWH, to call upon Him for answers to their requests, provide for their needs, and to protect them. On YHWH's part was the expectation that Israel would keep the Laws as given. (See my article "[You and Free Will](#)," for an untraditional perspective on why Israel failed to obey the Laws of YHWH.)

In 1977 and 1978, Dr. Ernest Martin wrote two articles I compiled into a single article in 2008, "[The Ten Commandments](#)." This article shows that the Ten Commandments had deficiencies that were later put forth by Jesus and the writers of the New Testament. It might be a good idea for you to read or review that article before you continue reading this one. It will give you good background information for what follows below.

The Laws of God are excellent teaching, even though limited due to the sinful nature of man:

"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might [and does] become exceeding sinful.

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."

• *Romans 7:12-18*

The apostle Paul recognized and presented to us truth that the Laws of God — and particularly the Ten

³ Besides the first five books of the Bible, Moses also wrote songs. See Psalm 90:1 ("[Psalms, Music and Prophecy](#)"):

"[O]ther songs of Moses exist. The first song mentioned is in Exodus 15:1-19. It seems this song is sung in heaven as referred to in Revelation 15:3. Just before his death Moses composed another [a second] song, Deuteronomy 31:30-32:47, typically called 'the Song of Moses.'"

Psalm 90 introduces the fourth of five sections of the Psalms, comprising Psalms 90-106, a section about various triumphs of God in history. See also "[New Songs Coming](#)" and particularly "[Appendix One: Preliminary Suggestions For the Structure of the Psalms](#)" which explains the five divisions of Psalms, with each section corresponding to the messages of the 5 books of Moses.

⁴ One of many synonyms of "law" is the term "constitution." The Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the country. One role of the Supreme Court of the United States is to decide as to whether laws passed by Congress and signed by the President are legal within the Constitution.

Commandments — are the means by which sin is recognized. Only God through Christ was able to change this horrible situation. God our Father did so through His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ becoming flesh, living, dying, being resurrected for our sins, our breaking the Laws of God.

The first four chapters of Dr. Martin’s book [*The Essentials of New Testament Doctrine*](#) address directly the matter of the Old Testament laws. They are:

- [“Chapter 1: The Law of God”](#)
- [“Chapter 2: The Law Was Given By Angels”](#)⁵
- [“Chapter 3: Progressive Revelation”](#)
- [“Chapter 4: The Conclusion of the Mosaic System”](#)

Read [“The Intertestamental Period,”](#) to learn how the Laws of God were perverted by an oral law developed after the Old Testament canon was completed by Ezra the priest. Jesus called this oral law **“the tradition of men,”** referring to **“the tradition of the elders”** (Mark 7:1 and 5) of the Jewish community that developed centuries before. Jesus openly challenged Pharisees and scribes:

“He answered and said unto them, ‘Well has Esaias [Isaiah 29:13] prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.”

Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things you do.’

And he said unto them, ‘Full well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition.’”

• **Mark 7:6–9 (also Matthew 15:7–9)**

Introduction and General Statements

To the right is an outline of the legal categories of the Laws of God. The full outline of the Laws was compiled by an unidentified editor and included in a study Bible by the publisher, Thomas Nelson. The editor gave verse citations of where the Laws are presented.

In Chapter 3, [“The Original Number of Old Testament Books,”](#) in his book [*Restoring the Original Bible: The Design and Development of the Holy Scriptures*](#),⁶ Dr. Martin stressed that the books of Moses were not only the first five books of the Old Testament and the Bible, they were far more important. The Law of Moses in these first five books functioned as the legal constitution of the people of Israel. They were God’s laws given by angels.

These laws were modified as social conditions and situations changed. The United States provides

Categories of “The Laws of Bible”

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| I. Forms of Government |
| II. Citizenship Under the Theocracy |
| III. Laws of the Theocracy |
| IV. Criminal Codes |
| V. Laws Pertaining to Domestic Relations |
| VI. Estates — Descent and Distribution Laws |
| VII. Social Security and Welfare Laws |
| VIII. Laws Pertaining to Contracts |
| IX. Religious Laws |
| X. Laws Pertaining to Legal Procedure |
| XI. Tort Laws |
| XII. Laws of Sanitation and Cleanliness |
| XIII. Laws Pertaining to Animals |
| XIV. Laws Concerning Interest and Loans |

⁵ This chapter of *Essentials* demonstrates from Scripture that one problem of the Law of God was that angels made mistakes in applying the law and in how they punished Israel. They acted in YHWH’s name as His legal agents, yet they made errors. (As Job said, **“Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly”** (Job 4:18). While God’s Law is perfect, the giving of the Law and its implementation was flawed. Christ corrected all these issues regarding the Law of God. In the end, all is now (and shall be) done according to God, **“who works all things after the counsel of his own will”** (Ephesians 1:11).

⁶ Latest edition 1994, Portland, Oregon, Associates for Scriptural Knowledge.

for amendments to change its Constitution as needed (for better or worse). The same applied to God's Laws; He modified them as He saw fit.

Some laws in Deuteronomy changed from earlier laws in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers due to different conditions after the 40-years Wilderness sojourn of Israel. References in Deuteronomy denote changes from Laws of God given at Sinai and at other times in the Wilderness. They may be additional laws, slight changes to existing laws, or total revisions to earlier laws in Genesis,⁷ Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. After Moses completed writing Deuteronomy he gave the five books over for safekeeping.

“And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of YHWH, and unto all the elders of Israel.”

• **Deuteronomy 31:9**

Here are other issues to consider before presenting the listing of “the Laws of the Bible”:

- The many footnotes cite ASK articles and chapters of books. Unless otherwise noted, consider that all were written by Dr. Martin and edited by me. I will specify if I wrote an article.
- I changed abbreviated verse citations and wrote them in full, which is my preference for all ASK articles.
- I place a * [star] after an outline letter or number, but before the text. It means that I added an entry to the editor's list of categories.
- I put New Testament citations in parentheses such as (Romans 5:4). New Testament verses usually explain an updated meaning of a law. Sometimes they alter and expand the meaning of the Law to better fulfill God's ultimate Law of love: to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself. For example Romans 13:8–10:

“Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loves another has fulfilled the law. For this, ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not covet’; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

- The Laws of the Bible are the necessary details for community living for the twelve tribes of Israel. These Laws are distinct from social customs in the Middle East and those customs specific to the twelve tribes of Israel. Dr. Martin's 1996 article “[Social Customs Versus Biblical Law](#)” contains surprising information you probably never thought about (or forgot) regarding the Laws of God as well as social customs in Scripture. Not everything is legally wrong or right regarding the laws of God. Some actions and activities are morally neutral.
- The Ten Commandments are not included in the list of Laws. They were the foundation for all other laws for Israel. The Commandments were collected assertions by God Himself that comprise the core of Israel's Covenant with YHWH — obey the Commandments and receive blessings, disobey and receive punishments. YHWH spoke the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai directly to the people (Exodus 20:1–17). No punishments are specified at that time. Moses repeated them in Deuteronomy 5:6–21. The differences reflect what was received when Moses was alone with YHWH on Mt. Sinai. Moses remembered and repeated the Commandments with variations from what YHWH spoke in Exodus:

⁷ For example, long before Moses the law of circumcision was given to the patriarch Abraham as told in Genesis 17:10–11:

“This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your seed after you; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.”

Read the rest of Genesis chapter 17 about circumcision. Abraham circumcised his son Isaac as YHWH commanded (Genesis 21:4). Circumcision is in Genesis 34:15, 17, 22, 24; Exodus 4:26, 12:44, 48, 23:13; Leviticus 12:3; and Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6.

“And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them,

‘Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that you may learn them, and keep, and do them. YHWH our God made a covenant with us in Horeb [another name for Mt. Sinai]. YHWH made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. YHWH talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,’

(I stood between YHWH and you at that time, to show you the word of YHWH: for you were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount.)

• *Deuteronomy 5:1–5*

- The list of laws does not detail the ritual laws of the Tabernacle, the priestly functions, nor the details of the offerings (sacrifices) made to YHWH. The list also does not give details of how the Tabernacle was to be constructed. Those regulations have no connection with the civil, criminal, or moral statutes covered in the Laws of God presented below. Not all Laws originate with Moses, some originate later..

Ignorance of “the Laws of the Bible” is never an excuse to escape punishment, just as in our modern legal systems, ignorance of the law is not an excuse to exempt a person from prosecution. All Israelites were (and are) responsible to keep the Laws simply because they were born into one of the twelve tribes. (Similarly, all Gentiles are sinners by virtue of being born from Adam and Eve who sinned and God imposed death upon their descendants.) Our tendency toward death is the reason we sin. It is how God made us. We did nothing to deserve our sentence of death, except to be born with sinful flesh. The people of Israel relieve themselves of that responsibility to obey God’s laws only if they accept Christ Jesus as their Messiah. Even then, New Covenant believers have obligations under the laws of Christ.⁸

Likewise, Christ’s righteousness is given to us for our salvation — again, without anything we did to deserve it. “Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Genesis 26:5). We learn from the apostle Paul that YHWH counted Abraham’s faith as righteousness to him:

“For what says the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness ... But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, Saying,

‘Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.’

Comes this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also ...

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

• *Romans 4:3, 5–11, 13*

This process is explained in *Essentials*, chapter 8, “The Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness to His People.”

Why then read, study, or even think about “The Laws of God”? Because His Laws are the standards that righteousness must fulfill. The laws and His righteousness have been fulfilled on our behalf by Christ Jesus.

⁸ See Dr. Martin’s article “The Mystery and the New Covenant” which explains the distinctions between Old and New Covenants, and obligations of New Covenant believers. For a different approach read chapter 24 of *Essentials*, “‘Our Destiny’ The Final Revelation of God.” The last chapter of *Essentials*, “Just Who Are You?” tells of the different phases of knowledge and understanding of God as He leads each human being on their individual path of salvation. Every person is in one of those phases of knowledge and all ultimately become a child of God at some future time, as God sees fit to give that knowledge to us.

“The Laws of the Bible”

*I. Forms of Government*⁹

- A. **Patriarchal.** The family being the unit of life, the father as head of the family was the authoritative ruler — Judges 11:29–40; Job 1:5
- B. **Theocracy.** God was the direct ruler of His people — Exodus 19:3–8¹⁰
- C. **Government by judges.** The people forgot God. God chastised them by allowing them to be enslaved by their enemies. Upon repentance God raised up military chieftains as deliverers — Judges 2:13–18
- D. **Monarchy.** This was begun by the coronation of Saul, reached its height in David and Solomon, and ended with the Babylonian captivity — Deuteronomy 17:14–20; 1 Samuel 8:11–18, 10:24

II. Citizenship Under the Theocracy

- A. **Israelites.**¹¹ Those of Israel who ratified the covenant of Sinai, and later their children, were entitled to the rights of citizenship — Exodus 19:5–8; Deuteronomy 6:1–9
- B. **Moabites and Ammonites excluded** — Deuteronomy 23:3
- C. **Edomites and Egyptians in the third generation were eligible** — Deuteronomy 23:7–8

III. Laws of the Theocracy

- A. **Pertaining to citizenship**
 - 1. *Law applied equally to strangers as to natives* — Leviticus 24:22; Numbers 15:22–30
 - 2. *Israelite not to marry a stranger* — Genesis 34:14
 - 3. *Strangers could own slaves; Israelites can sell themselves as slaves* — Leviticus 25:47–55
- B. **Pertaining to slavery**¹²

⁹ YHWH is the Creator of all things and the ultimate King of His people Israel. The theocracy He rules has many delegated non-human subjects, whether humans realize it or not. Those beings operate and perform “**the counsel of His will**” (Ephesians 1:11) in the background of events on earth. Human rulers of Israel (sections A, C, and D) were always subject to YHWH’s will even when they opposed His laws and commands, and even when they refused to acknowledge His laws and commands. Most every Israelite, whether living in the land promised to Abraham or living outside the land, was taught these laws during their lives and was given some understanding of what the laws were, the circumstances of when and why they were given, and the consequences for disobedience of these laws. ... Yet they sinned greatly and were punished.

¹⁰ The proper relationship of God to His Son Christ Jesus is stated directly by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 8:4–7. This passage should settle most questions about the nature of God and His relation to His creation:

“We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge.”

God judges us and we judge God (even though we have no right to do so). [“Judging God and Man?”](#) (David Sielaff) and [“Judgment On Man and God.”](#)

¹¹ [“Who Is Israel?”](#) (David Sielaff), [“Just Who Is an Israelite Today?”](#), [“Who are the Northern Ten Tribes of Israel Today?”](#), [“The Land of Israel in Prophecy,”](#) [“Gentile Nations and Israel,”](#) [“Ancient Nations in the Middle East - Part 1”](#) and [“Ancient Nations in the Middle East - Part 2.”](#)

¹² Precise figures are impossible, but it is likely more people are enslaved today than any time in world history. Search the internet with the words “countries with laws against slavery” and you find several ways that organizations and governments define the various forms of human bondage. Slavery today is more than sex trafficking. It covers a wide range of servitude: economic slavery, such as sweatshops with long hours and dangerous conditions, forced labor by governments, forced marriages, commercial sexual exploitation, forced child labor (ages 5–14) in agriculture and factories, and those forced to run drugs. Religion can enslave the minds of people, see [“Religion is Slavery, Christianity is Freedom”](#) and [“Our Desire to Be Slaves”](#) (David Sielaff).

1. **Slaves obtained:**

- a. *Captured in war* — Numbers 31:7–11
- b. *Inherited* — Leviticus 25:45–46
- c. *Bought* — Exodus 21:2
- d. *Sold for debt or theft* — Exodus 22:3; Deuteronomy 15:12

2. **How to treat slaves:**

- a. *Israelites could be redeemed from slavery* — Leviticus 25:47–55
- b. *Jewish slaves to be set free in Year of Jubilee* — Leviticus 25:39–41
- c. *Regarded as part of owner's household and possession* — Genesis 12:16; Exodus 20:17
- d. *Could be struck by master* — Exodus 21:20–21
- e. *Fugitive not to be returned* — Deuteronomy 23:15–16; 1 Samuel 30:15
- f. *Freed if ill-treated* — Exodus 21:26–27
- g. *To enjoy the Sabbath* — Exodus 20:10

C. **Pertaining to taxation**

- 1. **Census taken** — (Luke 2:1–3)
- 2. **Purpose of taxes:**
 - a. *Valuation of persons* — Leviticus 27:1–13
 - b. *Temple service* — Exodus 30:11–16; 2 Chronicles 24:6, 9
 - c. *Taxes* — (Matthew 22:15–21; Romans 13:6–7)
- 3. **Amount of taxes** — 1 Samuel 8:10–18
- 4. **Priests and attendants exempt** — Ezra 7:24

D. **Military laws**¹³

- 1. **Age of soldiers** — Numbers 1:2–3, 26:2
- 2. **Selective draft** — Numbers 31:3–7
- 3. **Exemption from service:**
 - a. *Levites* — Numbers 1:49
 - b. *Certain individuals* — Deuteronomy 20:5–7
 - c. *Fainthearted* — Deuteronomy 20:8
- 4. **Cleanliness in camp** — Numbers 31:19–20; Deuteronomy 23:9–14
- 5. **Regulations in battle:**
 - a. *Notice to be given* — Deuteronomy 20:10–11
 - b. *Fruit trees spared* — Deuteronomy 20:19–20
 - c. *Treatment of captives* — Numbers 21:2–3, 35, 31:17–18; Deuteronomy 20:14–18; Joshua 11:14
 - d. *Plunder* — Deuteronomy 20:14
 - e. *Indemnity* — 2 Kings 3:4

IV. Criminal Codes

A. **Crimes against the public**

- 1. **Bribery** — Exodus 23:8; Deuteronomy 16:19; Proverbs 17:23
- 2. **Contempt for the law** — Numbers 15:30; Deuteronomy 6:16–17
Penalty — Deuteronomy 17:12–13
- 3. **Perjury** — Exodus 20:16; Leviticus 19:12
Penalty — Deuteronomy 19:16–20

¹³ “[Christians and War](#)” and “[Why Does God Need an Army?](#)” (David Sielaff).

4. ***Perverting or obstructing justice*** — Exodus 23:1–2, 6; Leviticus 19:15; Psalm 82:2
Penalty — Deuteronomy 16:19–20
 5. ***Conspiracy*** — 2 Samuel 15:10–12
- B. Crimes of immoral acts** — all of Leviticus chapter 18
1. ***Adultery*** — Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18
Penalty — Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22–25
 2. ***Rape*** — Deuteronomy 22:25–26
Penalty — Deuteronomy 22:25–29
 3. ***Prostitution*** — Leviticus 19:29; Deuteronomy 23:17
Penalty — Leviticus 21:9
 4. ***Seduction*** — Exodus 22:16–17
Penalty — Exodus 22:17; Deuteronomy 22:28–29
 5. ***Incest*** — Leviticus 18:6–18; Deuteronomy 22:30
Penalty — Leviticus 20:11–21
 6. ***Sodomy*** — Leviticus 18:22; Deuteronomy 23:17
Penalty — Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 20:13
 7. * [Added] ***Bestiality*** — Leviticus 18:23
Penalty — Exodus 20:15–16, 22:19; Leviticus 20:15–16
- C. Crimes against persons**
1. ***Murder*** — Exodus 20:13
Penalty — Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21:12; Numbers 35:30–31
 2. ***Manslaughter*** — Exodus 21:12–14; Joshua 20:3–6
Penalty — Numbers 35:11, 22–28
 3. ***Assault*** — Exodus 21:18–26
Penalty — Exodus 21:19–27; Leviticus 24:19–20
 4. ***Kidnapping*** — Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 24:7
 5. ***Slander*** — Leviticus 19:16
- D. Crimes against property**
1. ***Stealing*** — Exodus 20:15, 22:1–12; Deuteronomy 23:24–25
 2. ***Arson*** — Exodus 22:6
 3. ***Moving a landmark*** — Deuteronomy 19:14

V. Laws Pertaining to Domestic Relations

A. Marriage¹⁴

1. ***Ordained by God*** — Genesis 1:27–28, 2:18, 24
2. ***Within the tribe*** — Numbers 36:6
3. ***Polygamy later forbidden*** — (1 Corinthians 7:2; 1 Timothy 3:2 [for teachers])

¹⁴ “[Marriage, Divorce, Living Together and the Bible](#).” Many different parameters of relations are covered in Leviticus chapter 18. Note God’s introduction regarding forbidden relations in Leviticus 18:3–4:

“**After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein you dwell, shall you not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall you not do: neither shall you walk in their ordinances. You shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am YHWH your God.**”

4. **Forbidden marriage** [and sexual relations] **with next of kin**¹⁵ — Leviticus 18:6–19
 - a. *Stepmother* — Leviticus 18:8, 20:11
 - b. *Aliens* — Exodus 34:13–17; Deuteronomy 7:1–3
 - c. *Sister* — Leviticus 20:17
 - d. *Aunt* — Leviticus 20:19–20
 - e. *Grandchild* — Leviticus 18:10
 - f. *Sister-in-law* — Leviticus 18:16
 - g. * [Added] *Daughter-in-law* — Leviticus 18:15
5. **Divorce**
 - a. *Not to remarry woman divorced by another man*¹⁶ — Leviticus 21:7, 22:13; Deuteronomy 24:1–4; Isaiah 50:1 (1 Corinthians 7:10–11)
 - b. *For committing adultery* — Jeremiah 3:8 (Matthew 19:3–9; Mark 10:2–12; Luke 16:18)

B. Parent and child

1. *Father has authority over child* — Numbers 30:3–5
2. *Father to arrange marriage* — Genesis 24:2–4
3. *Parents to educate* — Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 22:6 (Ephesians 6:4)
4. *Parents to discipline* — Exodus 21:15, 17; Deuteronomy 21:18–21; Proverbs 22:15
5. *Children to honor parents* — Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:3, 32; Proverbs 1:8, 15:5
6. *Children to be regarded as gift of God* — Genesis 33:5, 48:9; Joshua 24:3
7. *Penalty for children who dishonor parents* — Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18–21

VI. Estates — Descent and Distribution Laws

A. Inheritance

1. *Sons inherit father's estate* — Genesis 21:10–13; 1 Chronicles 5:1
2. *Double portion to firstborn* — Deuteronomy 21:15–17
3. *Wife not heir, but descends with property to next of kin* — Ruth 4:1–12
4. *Daughters heirs when no sons* — Numbers 27:8–9
5. *When no sons or daughters, inheritance to nearest relative* — Numbers 27:9–11

B. Real property titles

1. **Real estate:**
 - a. *Land divided among tribes* — Numbers 26:52–56; Joshua 14:5
 - b. *Not transferable* — Numbers 36:6–9
 - c. *Not permanently sold* — Leviticus 25:23–28
 - d. *Value of land according to years after Jubilee* — Leviticus 25:15–16
 - e. *Release of land at Jubilee* — Leviticus 25:8–34
 - f. *Mode of transfer:*
 - (1) Deed made — Jeremiah 32:9–14
 - (2) Taking off sandal — Ruth 4:3–11
 - (3) Deed delivered in presence of witnesses — Jeremiah 32:10, 12
 - (4) Deed recorded — Jeremiah 32:14

¹⁵ Note that marriage between first cousins and closer was permitted in the time of the Patriarchs. In fact, Abraham married his half-sister Sarah. Today marriage between first cousins (permitted in some Arab societies) is not desirable because a negative genetic load of defects can manifest in later generations, unfortunately even in the first generation after such a union.

¹⁶ The woman was divorced from husband #1, and divorced from husband #2. She is not allowed to remarry #1.

2. **Personal property** (All moveable property, as against real property such as houses and lands)
 - a. *Sale recognized* — Leviticus 25:14
 - b. *Pledges of:*
 - (1) Children given as — 2 Kings 4:1–7
 - (2) Upper and lower millstone prohibited — Deuteronomy 24:6
 - (3) Not retained overnight — Exodus 22:26–27; Deuteronomy 24:13
 - (4) Voluntary — Deuteronomy 24:10–11

VII. Social Security and Welfare Laws

- A. **Widows and orphans** — Exodus 22:22–23; Deuteronomy 14:28–29 (Acts 6:1–4; 1 Timothy 5:3–16)
 1. *Widow to marry nearest relative* — Deuteronomy 25:5–10
 2. *Widow and orphans not to be oppressed* — Zechariah 7:9–12; Malachi 3:5
- B. **Neighbors** — Leviticus 19:13
- C. **The poor** — Exodus 22:25–27; Leviticus 19:9–10; Deuteronomy 15:7–11 (Luke 3:11, 14:13–14)
- D. **Strangers or aliens** — Leviticus 19:33–34; Deuteronomy 24:19–22; Zechariah 7:9–12
- E. **Poor and needy** — Deuteronomy 24:14–15
- F. **Servants** — Deuteronomy 24:14–15
- G. **Handicapped**
 1. *Blind* — Leviticus 19:14; Deuteronomy 27:18 (Luke 14:13–14)
 2. *Deaf* — Leviticus 19:14
 3. *Lame* — (Luke 14:12–14)

VIII. Laws Pertaining to Contracts

- A. **Debts** — Exodus 22:25; Deuteronomy 15:1–3; Nehemiah 5:10–11
- B. **With neighbors** — Deuteronomy 15:1–3
- C. **With foreigners** — Deuteronomy 15:1–3
- D. **Interest** — Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:35–37; Deuteronomy 23:19–20; Ezekiel 18:10–13
- E. **Loans** — Exodus 22:25; Deuteronomy 23:19–20; 2 Kings 4:1–7; Nehemiah 5:2–5
- F. **Mortgages** — Nehemiah 5:2–5
- G. **Pledges** — (See VI. B. 2 above)
- H. **Sales** — Leviticus 25:14
- I. **Sales of Land** — Leviticus 25:23–28; Ruth 4:3–11; Jeremiah 32:9–14
- J. **Of servitude** — Exodus 21:2–4; Deuteronomy 15:12
- K. **Sureties** — Proverbs 6:1–2, 17:18

IX. Religious Laws

- A. **Clean and unclean meat**¹⁷ — Leviticus 11:2–31; Deuteronomy 14:3–21
- B. **Forbidden foods**
 1. *Fat and blood* — Leviticus 3:17, 17:10–14, 23–24.¹⁸

¹⁷ [“The Dietary Laws of the Bible.”](#)

¹⁸ Fat surrounding organs must be cut away. Cooked fat with the flesh can be eaten. No blood should be eaten.

2. *Flesh torn by beasts* — Exodus 22:31
3. *Fruit of young trees* — Leviticus 19:23–25

C. Sacred obligations¹⁹

1. *Firstborn* — Exodus 34:19–20
2. *Firstfruits* — Exodus 34:26; Deuteronomy 18:4
3. *Tithes*²⁰ — Genesis 14:19–20; Leviticus 27:30–33; Malachi 3:8–11 (Matthew 23:23)
4. *Atonement money* — Exodus 30:12–16
5. *Freewill offerings* — Leviticus 22:17–20; Numbers 15:1–4; 2 Chronicles 31:4–12

D. Sacred calendar²¹

1. *Sabbath*²² — Genesis 2:1–3; Exodus 16:23; Leviticus 23:3; Numbers 28:9–10; Deuteronomy 5:12–15; Nehemiah 10:31; Ezekiel 46:3
 - a. *Punishment for not keeping*²³ — Numbers 15:32–36
 - b. *Made for man* — (Mark 2:23–28)
 - c. *Healing on the Sabbath* — (Luke 13:14–17, 14:3–5; John 5:8–16)
2. *Passover*²⁴ — Exodus 12:1–14; Deuteronomy 16:1–8; Ezekiel 45:21, 24 (Luke 22:7–18)
3. *Feast of Unleavened Bread* — Exodus 34:18; Ezekiel 45:21, 24 (Luke 22:7–18)
4. *Feast of Weeks* [Pentecost]²⁵ — Deuteronomy 16:9–12 (Acts 2:1–42)
5. *Feast of Tabernacles* — Leviticus 23:33–44; Numbers 29:12–40; Deuteronomy 16:13–17
6. *Sabbatical (seventh) Year* — Exodus 21:2–6, 23:10–11; Leviticus 25:1–7; Deuteronomy 15:1–14; 2 Chronicles 36:21; Nehemiah 10:31
7. *Day of Atonement*²⁶ — Leviticus 23:26–32

E. Crimes against God

1. *Worship of false gods*²⁷ — Exodus 20:1–5
Penalty — Exodus 22:20
2. *Spiritualism*²⁸ — Leviticus 20:27
Penalty — Leviticus 20:27; Exodus 22:18

¹⁹ “[How to Worship God](#)” and “[How You Can Influence God.](#)”

²⁰ “[The Tithing Dilemma](#)” is a short book that answers questions of how tithes were required and why, as well as to when tithes were to be given and received. Only if there is a Temple can tithes be paid. In fact, it is a sin to offer tithes to anyone not qualified to receive them. Abraham’s tithe (*tithe* means one/tenth or 10%) of the spoils from battle was not required. Abraham did not owe the money. He voluntarily gave 10% of the spoils from battle to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:19–20). The text does not say Abraham was required to give anything to Melchizedek (Hebrews 10:1–7). Besides the book, see “[How to Give to God.](#)” Also, see “[Who Was Melchizedek?](#)” (David Sielaff).

²¹ “[The Symbolism of Biblical Holy Days.](#)” “[The Jewish Calendar and Biblical Authority.](#)” “[The New Testament Calendar](#)” and “[The Modern Jewish Calendar.](#)”

²² “[Did Abraham Observe the Sabbath?](#)”

²³ Israelites are punished for Sabbath violations, not Christians (Romans 14:4–6; Galatians 4:9–10). See Colossians 2:16–17:

“**Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.**”

²⁴ “[The Passover Contradiction.](#)” “[The Law of Moses, The Passover and the Lord’s Supper.](#)” and “[The Passover/Easter Controversy.](#)”

²⁵ “[The Teachings of Pentecost.](#)”

²⁶ “[Fasting - It’s Use and Abuse.](#)”

²⁷ See “[Idolatry - The Curse of Religion.](#)” “[The Pagan Images of Christians Today.](#)” “[Idolatry and God’s Punishment](#)” (David Sielaff), “[Idolatry and the Sons of God](#)” (David Sielaff), “[Elohim and the Son of God Part 1](#)” and “[Elohim and the Son of God Part 2.](#)”

²⁸ “[How to Identify False Prophets.](#)” “[Magic in the Bible.](#)” and “[The Pagan Immortal Soul and ‘Double Doctrine.’](#)”

3. *Blasphemy* — Leviticus 24:16
Penalty — Leviticus 24:16

X. Laws Pertaining to Legal Procedure

- A. **Judges appointed** — Exodus 18:13–26; 2 Chronicles 19:4–11
 1. *Moses, first judge* — Exodus 18:13–26
 2. *Priests judge in small matters* — Exodus 18:22
 3. * [Added] *Judges raised up to judge/rule* — Deuteronomy 1:13–17, 16:18–20; Judges 2:16–17
 4. *Kings as judges* — 1 Kings 3:9, 7:7
- B. **Submission of cases**
 1. *Ordinary cases submitted to judges* — Deuteronomy 25:1–2
 2. *Exceptional cases taken to Levitical priest for verdict* — Deuteronomy 17:8–11
 3. *Extreme cases submitted to YHWH for decision* — Numbers 5:11–31; Deuteronomy 21:1–9
 4. *Judges must not pervert justice* — Exodus 23:6–8
 5. *Bribery forbidden* — Deuteronomy 16:18–20
- C. **Where courts were held**
 1. *At gate of city* — Deuteronomy 21:19
 2. *In Hall of judgment* — 1 Kings 7:7
- D. **Judgments**
 1. *Regarded as from God* — Deuteronomy 1:17, 19:6
 2. *Righteous to be justified and wicked condemned* — Deuteronomy 25:1
 3. *Sentence to be executed* — Deuteronomy 25:2–3
- E. **Appeals**
 1. *To Moses* — Exodus 18:22, 26; Deuteronomy 1:17
 2. *To priests* — Deuteronomy 17:8–11
 3. *To the king* — 1 Kings 3:16–28
- F. **Damages**
 1. *For disfiguring a person* — Leviticus 24:19–20
 2. *For stealing* — Exodus 22:4
 3. * [Added] *For ruining a crop* — Exodus 22:5
 4. *Kindling a fire which destroys property* — Exodus 22:6
 5. *Breach of trust* — Leviticus 6:1–5
 6. *Killing an animal* — Exodus 21:35–36; Leviticus 24:18, 21
 7. *Loss of animal falling into pit* — Exodus 21:33–34
 8. *Loss of borrowed property* — Exodus 22:14
- G. **Methods of punishment** [not limited to examples cited below]²⁹
 1. *Infliction in kind* — Genesis 9:6; Leviticus 24:19–20
 2. *Burning* — Leviticus 20:14
 3. *Mutilation* — Deuteronomy 25:11–12
 4. *Hanging* — Deuteronomy 21:22–23

²⁹ Capital punishment was universal in ancient kingdoms. Some punishments in Scripture seem severe, but they were typical of the times. Their purpose was to protect society and prevent inbreeding, i.e., the punishment for sex between a man with a mother and a daughter (Leviticus 20:14). It is likely that pagan Gentiles did this very thing. See “[Judicial Execution and the Bible.](#)”

5. *Stoning* — Leviticus 24:16
6. *Beating* — Deuteronomy 25:2–3
7. *Excommunication* — Ezra 7:26, 10:8
8. *Imprisonment* — Ezra 7:26
9. *Compensation for damages* — Exodus 21:19, 32, 36
10. *Restitution for stolen or borrowed property* — Exodus 22:12, 14–15

H. Method of protection

1. *Cities of refuge appointed*³⁰ — Numbers 35:6–15
2. *Protection until trial is held* — Numbers 35:12
3. *Murderer unprotected* [i.e., no ransom] — Numbers 35:30–31
4. *Unintentional manslayer remains in city of refuge until death of high priest* — Joshua 20:1–6

XI. Tort Laws³¹

- A. **Assault** — Exodus 21:18–19
- B. **Compensation** — Exodus 21:18–19, 32
- C. **Damage by animals** — Exodus 21:32
- D. **Damage by fire** — Exodus 22:6
- E. **Injury to animals** — Exodus 21:33–36; Leviticus 24:18, 21
- F. **Loss of borrowed property** — Exodus 22:14–15
- G. **Personal injury** — Leviticus 24:19–20
- H. **Rights of strangers** — Leviticus 24:22

XII. Laws of Sanitation and Cleanliness³²

- A. **Purification of a woman after childbirth** — Leviticus 12:1–8
- B. **Test for leprosy, varieties and symptoms** — Leviticus 13:1–59
- C. * [Added] **Ritual purification procedures for healed lepers** — Leviticus 14:1–32
- D. **Purification of a leper's house** — Leviticus 14:33–57
- E. **Purification of males with discharge** — Leviticus 15:1–15
- F. **Laws concerning the woman during menstruation** — Leviticus 15:24–33

³⁰ The guilty person manslaughter murder can seek refuge in one of the designated Levitical cities where Levites dominate. (A conviction of manslaughter out of revenge, was liable to a charge of murder.) The intent of this law was to decrease blood feuds among and between families, clans, and tribes. Like many such laws, this law of refuge cities probably had mixed results.

³¹ Tort laws charge and adjudicate wrongful acts that cause damage or loss to another person. Penalties, damages, and injunctions are often provided to compensate the damaged party. Many Jewish rulings dating from the 1st century are contained in the Mishnah, which is a listing of the Jewish “Oral Law.” (The Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud are commentaries on the Mishnah.) The Danby English translation can be downloaded at <https://archive.org/details/DanbyMishnah/page/n611>. The large file (78 megabytes) is in several formats, but PDF is best because it is fully searchable.

³² The laws of sanitation are different from the ritual purity laws of Section IX dealing with clean and unclean meats and forbidden foods (again see “[The Dietary Laws of the Bible](#).”) It is true, however, that unclean meats are less sanitary than clean meats. Some plagues or mass diseases are allowed by God, others He causes, such as the plagues of Egypt. YHWH used plagues to punish His people Israel, particularly when they disobeyed their covenant agreement with Him. Proper sanitation alone will not prevent plague. See “[Plagues and Prophecy](#) (David Sielaff),” “[Disease Epidemics and Bible Prophecy](#),” “[Healing and Christian Atonement](#),” “[Healing and New Testament Teaching](#),” “[God's Ongoing Creation](#) (David Sielaff),” “[Creation of Life in Contemporary Times](#),” and “[The Story of Creation](#)” (David Sielaff).

XIII. Laws Pertaining to Animals³³

- A. **Beasts of burden rest on Sabbath** — Exodus 23:12; Deuteronomy 25:4
- B. **Beasts of the field allowed to graze on fields in Sabbatical years** — Exodus 23:11
- C. **Mothers and young** — Leviticus 22:28; Deuteronomy 22:6–7
- D. **Enemy’s animals** — Exodus 23:4–5; Deuteronomy 22:4

XIV. Laws Concerning Interest and Loans

Interest on money was called “usury” in biblical times. (Now “usury” means excessive interest.)

- A. **Taking of interest forbidden among Israelites** — Exodus 22:25; Deuteronomy 23:19–20
Money borrowed for relief of distress.
- B. **Interest allowed to be charged to foreigners** — Deuteronomy 23:20
Money borrowed by foreigner to develop trade.
- C. **Property returned without interest** — Nehemiah 5:11–13
- D. **Differing weights and measures forbidden** — Deuteronomy 25:13–16

End

Law of Moses Imposed in the Future

In the future the Law of Moses will be imposed upon humanity before Christ returns. It will be done by someone that may surprise you. See Chapter 21, “[The Antichrist Will Establish the Mosaic Law](#)” in *The Essentials of New Testament Doctrine*. This startling assertion will be part of the mechanism of control over people. The antichrist’s “evidence” that he is the returning Messiah and Christ will be so compelling³⁴ that societal pressure (the most potent of societal controls) will help him enforce his other laws of oppression and recruitment for the people of the world to reject the true Christ when He returns.

Jesus told His disciples in Mark 13:21–23:

“And then if any man shall say to you, ‘Lo, here is Christ’; or, ‘lo, he is there’; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take you heed [pay attention to what I will say]: behold, I have foretold you all things.”

It may also surprise you to learn that when the true Christ returns, He will also impose the Laws of God upon the small remnant of people left alive after God’s punishments on humanity. See my June 2002 Commentary, “[Why Practice the Old Covenant in the Millennium?](#)” Christ will raise Israel to great glory (Ezekiel chapters 35–48). A new Temple will be built (Ezekiel chapters 40–42 and 44–48); with laws governing renewed animal offerings (Ezekiel chapter 44). Gentile nations will honor YHWH by sending representatives. If they fail to do so, they will be punished.

In the future, after the coming of the antichrist, after Christ’s return, and beyond the time of the Great White Throne judgment of Christ and God, what will be the purpose and goal of God’s plan? It is explained in *Essentials* in chapter 27, “[Our Inheritance: The Family of God](#)” and chapter 28, “[Who Are the Sons of God?](#)” If you do not yet know, learn about it now. If you already know, reread it.

David Sielaff, April 2020

³³ Animals are made for man’s use and benefit as part of God’s creation. They are to be cared for and nurtured, not abused, “**A righteous man regards the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel**” (Proverbs 12:10). All animals belong to God (Psalm 50:10–12). Each animal has a spirit unique to its kind and each animal is a “**living soul**” (in Hebrew, Genesis 1:20–21, 24, 30, 2:7, 19). All humans die like animals, and their bodies return to dust at death (Ecclesiastes 3:18–21), just like animals..

³⁴ “[The Life and Times of the Antichrist Part 1](#)” and “[The Life and Times of the Antichrist Part 2](#).”